(b) Expansion of elite forces (Special Forces) is a continuous process to enhance the combat effectiveness of the cutting edge of the Army.

Loss of Pistol surrendered by General Niazi

1474. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE'be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the pistol surrendered by Pakistani General Niazi to the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army in 1971 war, has been found missing;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the persons responsible therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to recover the pistol and the present status of the same?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The pistol, which was stolen in 2003 from the National Museum, was the personal weapon of Rear Admiral Mohammad Sharif, Flag Officer Commanding of the then East Pakistan Naval Forces. The matter is under investigation by Delhi Police.

Missing Spares of Army Helicopters

t1475. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any complaint regarding missing spare parts of Army Helicopters has been lodged with the Juswania Police Post of Badwani district of Madhya Pradesh;

(b) whether these spare parts were being transported to Bangalore *via* road; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and action taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) These stores were being transported in civil hired transport, from Delhi to Bangalore *via* Nasik.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) The incident took place near a railway crossing on 7th July 2004 at around 2400 hrs, when the driver and escort Shri Madan Lai, Shri Paramjit Rana and Sepoy Sanjay Kumar noticed one person running away from the rear of the vehicle into the bushes. The driver and escort, on preliminary check, noticed that the vehicle ropes were loosened at the rear and suspecting a theft, they lodged an FIR with Julwani Police Post of Badwani District. Subsequently, on carrying out a detailed check of the consignment, no loss was noticed and the same was intimated by Central Aviation Stores Depot Delhi Cantonment to the Julwani Police Post, Badwani District, *vide* a communication dated 26.7.2004 to treat the case as closed.

Merger of Secunderabad Cantonment Board with Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad

1476. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any request from the Government of Andhra Pradesh has been received in the Ministry to merge Secunderabad Cantonment Board with the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad;

(b) if so, when such a request was received in the Ministry; and

(c) the action contemplated by the Ministry in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A request was received during the year 1999. A similar request has also been received on 19th July 2004.

(c) The request of the State Government was considered by the Government and it has not been found feasible to merge the Cantonment areas with the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad due to security considerations.

Casualties in De-mining Operations

1477. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Army personnel/civilians killed in de-mining operations